1) Scion of the High Lord Kao Yang,
2) Po Yung was my father's name.
3) When She T'i pointed to the first month of the year,
4) On the day keng yin, I passed from the womb.

5) My father, seeing the aspect of my nativity,
6) Took omens to give me an auspicious name.
7) The name he gave me was True Exemplar;
8) The title he gave me was Divine Balance.

9) Having from birth this inward beauty,
10) I added to it fair outward adornment:
11) I dressed in selinea and shady angelica,
12) And twined autumn orchids to make a garland.

13) Swiftly I sped, as in fearful pursuit,
14) Afraid Time would race on and leave me behind.
15) In the morning I gathered the angelica on the mountains;
16) In the evening I plucked the sedges of the islets.

17) The days and months hurried on, never delaying;
18) Springs and autumns sped by in endless alternation:
19) And I thought how the trees and flowers were fading and falling,
20) And feared that my Fairest's beauty would fade too.

21) "Gather the flower of youth and cast out the impure!
22) Why will you not change the error of your ways?
23) I have harnessed brave coursers for you to gallop forth with:
24) Come, let me go before and show you the way!

25) "The three kings of old were most pure and perfect:
26) Then indeed fragrant flowers had their proper place.
27) They brought together pepper and cinnamon;
28) All the most prized blossoms were woven in their garlands.

29) Glorious and great were those two, Yao and Shun,
30) Because they had kept their feet on the right path.
31) And how great was the folly of Chieh and Chou,
32) Who hastened by crooked paths, and so came to grief.

33) "The fools enjoy their careless pleasure,
34) But their way is dark and leads to danger.
35) I have no fear for the peril of my own person,
36) But only lest the chariot of my lord should be dashed.

37) I hurried about your chariot in attendance,
38) Leading you in the tracks of the kings of old."
39) But the Fragrant One refused to examine my true feelings:
40) He lent ear, instead, to slander, and raged against me.

41) How well I know that loyalty brings disaster;
42) Yet I will endure: I cannot give it up.
43) I called on the ninefold heaven to be my witness,
44) And all for the sake of the Fair One, and no other.

45) There once was a time when he spoke with me in frankness;
46) But then he repented and was of another mind.
47) I do not care, on my own count, about this divorcement,
48) But it grieves me to find the Fair One so inconstant.

49) I had tended many an acre of orchids,
50) And planted a hundred rods of melilotus;
51) I had raised sweet lichens and the cart-halting flower,
52) And asarums mingled with fragrant angelica,

53) And hoped that when leaf and stem were in fullest bloom,
54) When the time had come, I could reap a fine harvest.
55) Though famine should pinch me, it is small matter:
56) But I grieve that all my blossoms should waste in rank weeds.

57) All others press forward in greed and gluttony,
58) No surfeit satiating their demands:
59) Forgiving themselves, but harshly judging others;
60) Each fretting his heart away in envy and malice.

61) Madly they rush in the covetous chase,
62) But not after that which my heart sets store by.
63) For old age comes creeping and soon will be upon me,
64) And I fear I shall not leave behind an enduring name.

65) In the mornings I drank the dew that fell from the magnolia:
66) At evening ate the petals that dropped from chrysanthemums.
67) If only my mind can be truly beautiful,
68) It matters nothing that I often faint for famine.

69) I pulled up roots to bind the valerian
70) And thread the fallen clusters of the castor plant;
71) I trimmed sprays of cassia for plaiting melilotus,
72) And knotted the lithe, light trails of ivy.

73) I take my fashion from the good men of old:
74) A garb unlike that which the rude world cares for:
75) Though it may not accord with present-day manners,
76) I will follow the pattern that P'eng Hsien has left.

77) Heaving a long sigh, I brush away my tears,
78) Grieving for man's life, so beset with hardships.
79) I have always loved pretty things to bind myself about with,
80) And so mornings I plaited and evenings I twined.

81) When I had finished twining my girdle of orchids,
82) I plucked some angelica to add to its beauty.
83) It is this that my heart takes most delight in,
84) And though I died nine times, I should not regret it.

85) What I do resent is the Fair One's waywardness:
86) Because he will never look to see what is in men's hearts.
87) All your ladies were jealous of my delicate beauty; H
88) They chattered spitefully, saying I loved wantonness.

89) Truly, this generation are cunning artificers!
90) From square and compass they turn their eyes and change the true measurement,
91) They disregard the ruled line to follow their crooked fancies:
92) To emulate in flattery is their only rule.

93) But I am sick and sad at heart and stand irresolute:
94) I alone am at a loss in this generation
95) Yet I would rather quickly die and meet dissolution
96) Before I ever would conent to ape their behaviour

97) Eagles do not flock like birds of lesser species
98) So it has been since the olden time.
99) How can the round and square ever fit together?
100) How can different ways of life ever be reconciled?

101) Yet humbling one's spirit and curbing one's pride,
102) Bearing blame humbly and enduring insults
103) But keeping pure and spotless and dying in righteousness
104) Such conduct was greatly prized by the wise men of old

105) Repenting, therefore, that I had not conned the way more closely.
106) I halted, intending to turn back again -
107) To turn about my chariot and retrace my road
108) Before I had advanced too far along the path of folly.

109) I walked my horses through the marsh's orchid-covered margin;
110) I galloped to the hill of pepper-trees and rested there
111) I could not go in to him for fear of meeting trouble
112) And so, retired, I would once more fashion my order raiment.

113) I made a coat of lots and water-chestnut leaves
114) And gathered lotus petals to make myself a skirt
115) I will no longer care that no one understands me
116) As long as I can keep the sweet fragrance of my mind

117) Higher still the hat now that towered on my head
118) And no longer the girdle that dangles from my waist
119) Fragrant and foul mingle in confusion
120) But my inner brightness has remained undimmed.

121) Suddenly I turned back and let my eyes wander
122) I resolved to go and visit all the world's quarters
123) My garland's crowded blossoms, mixed in fair confusion
124) Wafted the sweetness of their fragrance far and wide

125) All men have something in their lives that gives them pleasure
126) With me the love of beauty is my constant joy
127) I could not change this, even if my body were dismembered
128) For how could dismemberment ever hurt my mind?

129) My Nü Xu was fearful and clung to me imploringly
130) Lifting her voice up in expostulation:
131) 'Gun in his stubborness took no thought for his life
132) And perished, as result, on the moor of Feather Mountain

133) Why be so lofty, with your passion for purity?
134) Why must you alone have such delicate adornment?
135) Thorns, king-grass, curly-ear hold the place of power:
136) But you must needs stand apart and not speak them fair.

137) 'You cannot go from door to door convincing everybody;
138) No one can say "See, look into my mind!"
139) Others band together and like to have companions:
140) Why must you be so aloof? Why not heed my counsel?'

141) But I look to the wise men of old for my guidance
142) So sighing, with a full heart, I bore her upbraidings
143) And crossing the Yuan and Hsian, I journeyed southward
144) Till I came to where Chong Hua was and made my plaint to him

145) 'Singing the Nine Songs and dancing the Nine Changes
146) Qi of Xia made revelry and knew no restraint.
147) Taking no thought for the troubles that would follow
148) And so his five sons fell out, brother against brother

149) Yi loved idle roaming and hunting to distraction
150) And took delight in shooting at the mighty foxes
151) But foolish dissipation has seldom a good end
152) And Han Zhuo covetously took his master's wife

153) ‘Zhuo’s son, Jiao, put on his strong Armour
154) And wreaked his wild will without any restraint
155) The days passed in pleasure; far he forgot himself
156) Till his head came tumbling down from his shoulders

157) Jie of Xia all his days was a king most unnatural
158) And so he finally to meet with calamity
159) Zhou cut up and salted the bodies of his ministers
160) And so the days were numbered of the House of Yin

161) ‘Tang of Shang and Yu of Xia were reverent and respectful;
162) The House of Zhou chose the true way without error
163) Raising up the virtuous and able men to government
164) Following the straight line without fear or fervour.

165) High God in Heaven knows no partiality;
166) He looks for the virtuous and makes them his ministers
167) For only the wise and good can ever flourish
168) If it is given to them to possess the earth

169) ‘I have looked back into the past and forward to later ages
170) Examining the outcomes of men’s different designs
171) Where is the unrighteous man who could be trusted?
172) Where is the wicked man whose service could be used

173) Though I stand at the pit’s mouth and death yawns before me
174) I still feel no regret at the course I have chosen
175) Straightening the handle, regardless of the socket’s shape
176) For the crime the good men of old were hacked in pieces

177) Many a heavy sigh I heaved in my despair
178) Grieving that I was born in such an unlcuky time
179) I plucked soft lotus petals to wipe my welling tears
180) That fell down in rivers and wet my coat front

181) I knelt on my outspread skirts and poured my plaint out
182) And the righteousness within me was clearly manifest.
183) I yoked a team of jade dragons to a phoenix-figured vehicle
184) And waited for the wind to come, to soar up on my journey

185) I started out in the morning on my way from Cang-wu;
186) By evening I had arrived at the Hanging Garden
187) I wanted to stay a while in those fairy precints
188) But the swift-moving sun was dripping to the west

189) I ordered Xi He to stay the sun steeds’ gallop,
190) To stand over Yan-zi mountain and not go in
191) For the road was so far and so distant was my journey

192) And I wanted to go up and down, seeking my heart's desire

193) I watered my dragon steeds at the Pool of Heaven
194) And tied their reins up to the Fu-sang tree.
195) I broke a sprig of the Ruo tree to strike the sun with:
196) First I woul roa ma little for my enjoyment.

197) I sent Wang Shu ahead to ride before me;
198) The Wind God went behind as my outrider
199) The Bird of Heaven gave notice of my comings
200) The Thunder God warned me when all was not ready.

201) I caused my phoenixes to mount on their pinions
202) And fly ever onward by night and by day
203) The whirlwinds gathered and came out to meet me,
204) Leading clouds and rainbows, to give me welcome

205) In wild confusion, now joined and now parted
206) Upwards and downwards rushed the glittering train
207) I asked Heaven's porter to open up for me;
208) Bu he leant across Heaven's gate and eyed mt churlishly

209) The day was getting dark and drawing to its close
210) Knotting orchids, I waited in indecision
211) The muddy, impure world, so undiscriminating
212) Seeks always to hide beauty,out of jealousy

213) I decided when morning came to cross the White Water,
214) And climbed the peak of Lang-feng, and there tied up my steeds
215) Then I looked about me and suddenly burst out weeping
216) Because of that high hill there was no fair lady

217) Here I am, suddenly, in this House of Spring.
218) I have broken off a jasper branch to add to my girdle
219) Before the jasper flowers have shed their bright petals
220) I shall look for a maiden below to give it to

221) So I made Feng Long ride off on a cloud
222) To seek out the dwelling place of the lady Fu Fei.
223) I took of my girdle as a pledge of my suit to her,
224) And ordered Lame Beauty be the go-between.

225) Many were the hurried meetings and partings:
226) All the wills and caprices she was hard to woo.
227) In the evenings she went to lodge in the Qiong-shi mountain
228) In the mornings she washed her hair in the Wei-pan stream

With proud disdain she guarded her beauty
Passing each day in idle, wanton pleasures
Though fair she may b, she lacks all seemliness:
Come! I'll have none of her; let us search elsewhere!

I looked all around over the earth's four quarters
Circling the heavens till at last I alighted
I gazed on a jade tower's glittering splendour.
And spied the lovely daughter of the Lord of Song.

I sent off the magpie to pay my court to her
But the magpie told me that my suit had gone amiss.
The magpie flew off with noisy chatterings
I hate him for an idle, knavish fellow

My mind was irresolute and wavering;
I wanted to go, and yet I could not.
Already the phoenix has taken his present
And I feared that Gao Xin would get there before me

I wanted to go far away, but had nowhere to go:
Where could I wander to look for amusement
Before they were parried to Prince Shao Kang
Lord Yu's two daughters were there for the wooing.

But my pleader was weak and my matchmaker stupid
And I feared that this suit, too, would not be successful.
For the world is impure and envious of the able,
Eager to hide men's good and make much of their ill.

Deep in the palace, unapproachable
The wise king sltimbers and will not be awakened.
That the thoughts in my breast should all go unuttered -
How can I endure this until I end my days?

I searched for the holy plant and twigs of bamboo,
And ordered Ling Fen to make divination for me.
He said, 'Beauty is always bound to find its mate:
Who that was truly fair was ever without lovers?

Think of the vastness of the wide world:
Here is not the only place where you can find your lady
Go farther afield,' he said, 'and do not be faint-hearted.
What woman seeking handsome mate could ever refuse you?

'What place on earth does not boast some fragrant flower?

266) Why need you always cleave to your old home?
267) The world today is blinded with its own folly:
268) You cannot make people see the virtue inside you.

269) Most people's loathings and likings are different
270) Only these men here are not as others are;
271) For they wear mugwort and cram their waistbands with it,
272) But the lovely valleu orchid they deem unfit to wear.

273) 'Since the beauty of flower, then, and of shrub escapes them
274) What chance has a rarest jewel of gaining recognition?
275) They father up muck to stuff their perfume bags with;
276) The spicy pepper-plant they say has got no scent at all.'

277) I wanted to follow Ling Fen's auspicious oracle,
278) But I faltered and could not make my mind up.
279) But I heard that Wu Xian was descending in the evening,
280) So I lay in wait with offerings of peppered rice-balls.

281) The spirits came like a dense cloud descending
282) And the host of Doubting Mountain come crowding to meet him
283) His godhead was manifested by a blaze of radiance,
284) And he addressed me in these auspicious words:

285) 'To and fro in the earth you must everywhere wander
286) Seeking one whose thoughts are of your own measure.
287) Tang and Yu sought sincerely for the right helpers;
288) So Yi Yin and Gao Yao worked well with their princes.

289) 'As long as your soul within its beautiful,
290) What need have you of a matchmaker?
291) Yue laboured as a builder, pounding earth at Fu-yan
292) Yet Wu Ding employed him without a second thought

293) Lü Wang wielded the butcher's knife at Zhao-ge,
294) But King Wen met him and raised him up on high,
295) Ning Qi sand as he fed his ox at evening;
296) Duke Huan of Qi heard him and took him as his minister

297) 'Gather the flower of youth before it is too late,
298) While the good season is still not yet over.
299) Beware the lest the shrike sound his note before the equinox
300) Causing all the flowers to lose their fine fragrance.'

301) How splendid the glitter of my jasper girdle!
302) But the crowd made a dark screen, masking its beauty.
303) And I fear that my enemies, who never can be trusted,
304) Will break it out of spiteful jealousy.

305) The age is disordered in a tumult of changing

How can I tarry much longer among them?
Orchid and iris have lost all their fragrance
Flag and melilotus have changed into straw.

Why have all the fragrant flowers of days gone by
Now all the transformed themselves into worthless mugwort
What other reason can there be for this
But that they all have no more care for beauty

I thought that orchid was one to be trusted,
But he proved a sham, bent only on pleasing his masters
He overcame his goodness and conformed to evil counsels:
He no more deserves to rank with fragrant flowers.

Pepper is all wagging tongue and lives only for slander;
And even stinking dogwood seeks to fill a perfume bag.
Since they only seek advancement and labour for position
What fragrance have they deserving our respect?

Since, then, the world's way is to drift the way the tide runs
Who can stay the same and not change with all the rest?
Seeing the behaviour of orchid and pepper-flower,
What can be expected of cart-halt and selinea?

They have cast off their beauty and come to this:
Only my garland is left to treasure.
Its penetrating perfume does not easily desert it,
And even to this day its fragrance has not faded.

I will follow my natural bent and lease myself;
I will go off wandering to look for a lady
While my adornment is in its pristine beauty
I will travel around looking both high and low.

Since Ling Fen had given me a favourable oracle
I picked an auspicious day to start my journey on
I broke a branch of jasper to take for my meat.
And ground fine jasper meal for my journey's provisions

'Harness winged dragons to be my coursers;
Let my chariot be of fine work of jade and ivory!
How can I live with men whose hearts are strangers to me?
I am going a far journey to be away from them.'

I took the way that led towards the Kunlun mountain:
A long, long road with many a turning in it.
The cloud-embroidered banned flapped its great shade above us
And the jingling jade yoke-bells tinkled merrily.

345) I set off at morning from the Ford of Heaven
346) At evening I came to the world's western end.
347) Phoenixes followed me, bearing up my pennants
348) Soaring high aloft with majestic wing-beats.

349) 'See, I have come to the Desert of Moving Sands!'
350) Warily I drove along the banks of the Red Water.
351) Then, beckoning the water-dragons to make a bridge for me,
352) I summoned the God of the West to take me over.

353) So long the road had been and full of difficulties,
354) I sent word to my escort to take another route
355) To wheel around leftwards, skirting Buzhou Mountain:
356) On the shore of Western Sea we would reassemble

357) When we had mustered there, all thousand chariots
358) Jade hub to jade hum we galloped on abreast
359) My eight dragons steeds flew on with writhing undulations
360) My cloud -embroidered banners flapped on the wind.

361) In vain I tried to curb them, to slacken the swift pace:
362) The spirits soared high up, far into the distance.
363) We played Nine Songs and danced the Shao Dances,
364) Borrowing the time to make a holiday

365) But when I had ascended the splendour of the heavens,
366) I suddendly caught a glimpse below of my old home
367) My groom's heart was heavy and the horses for longing
368) Arched their heads back and refused to go on.

369) Enough!
370) There are no true men in the state: no one understands me.
371) Why should I cleave to the city of my birth?
372) Since none is worthy to work with in making a good government,
373) I shall go and join Peng Xian in the place where he abides.